

Introduction

This is my annual report about Social Services in Denbighshire. The report looks at performance in 2012/13 and sets out our priorities for 2013/14. The report provides a detailed assessment of how effective services are for adults and children and families.

How effective are our services

My overall assessment is that Denbighshire Social Services has succeeded in making real improvements in terms of both performance and quality over the past year.

The commitment and hard work of our workforce is exceptional and as a result we have been able to deliver positive outcomes for people. We can show that we have:

- supported families successfully at an early stage to help prevent problems escalating
- provided early support and helped people to regain their confidence and ability to care for themselves e.g. after a fall.
- supported people to live independently in the community and reduced the number of people admitted into Care Homes
- provided looked after children with stable and caring homes
- safeguarded children and vulnerable adults effectively
- worked in partnership with other authorities and agencies
- a stable workforce who are supported with their professional development
- strong leadership driving forward the agenda
- improved quality assurance processes
- robust financial management which has delivered services within budget

We set some ambitious challenges last year and I am pleased that we were able to take these forward. Specific achievements include successfully re-investing resources into family support and opening an Intensive Supported Independent Living Scheme (ISIL). The ISIL provides accommodation and intensive support for people with learning disabilities and people with physical disabilities. The ISIL consists of 3 bungalows with up to 4 tenants in each bungalow and provides an effective approach to supporting people to live more independently in the community. The scheme has enabled 3 young adults to move from residential settings into their own home.

A key action that was not delivered in 2012/13 was the development and delivery of an integrated disability service for children and young people and their families. However, we will see this new service in place in 2013/14. Staff sickness levels also remained higher than we would want to see.

During 2013/14 we will be launching an ambitious programme to modernise social care in Denbighshire. This will involve new, and remodelled, approaches to social care that are cost effective and sustainable within the context of a challenging financial environment and demographic pressures.

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In line with the Welsh Government's Social Services and Enhancing Wellbeing Bill our commitment is to develop services that give citizens real control and a stronger voice over the way they are supported. This will include a clear focus on supporting people to maintain their independence through targeted preventative and early intervention services which provide recovery, restoration and can demonstrate a reduction in the need for ongoing care. Providing high quality services that protect and support vulnerable people and children will remain a core feature.

Sally Ellis
Corporate Director Modernisation and Wellbeing
(Statutory Director of Social Services)

The Changing Face of Social Services

To be able to respond to the changing and increasing demands being placed on Social Services there is a need think about the social care agenda more broadly.

Social Services increasingly face serious challenges that include financial constraints, increased demand and shifting public expectations. This is at a time when the demography of our society is changing with:

- an ageing society with many more people in middle years with significant disabilities
- an increasing number of children with significant disabilities who rightly have high expectations of services
- changing family and community structures with continuing high rates of family breakdown

Like many authorities we are seeing increases in the number of:

- looked after children and those on the child protection register
- people with a learning disability
- older people with complex care needs and whose support needs are extensive
- carers who need support to help them continue to support vulnerable people

It is clear that responding to the demands with traditional models of social care is not an appropriate or sustainable response to meeting the needs and expectations of vulnerable people. The need for change has been identified within Denbighshire County Council's Corporate priorities.

Delivering the Council's priorities

Denbighshire's Council's priorities for 2012/17 include a commitment to:

- ensuring vulnerable people are protected and are able to live as independently as possible; and
- modernising the council to deliver efficiencies and improve services for our customers.

In 2013/14 our focus will be on a specific set of projects to modernise our services. We have established a 5 year programme to modernise social services including some new, some tested, and some radical ways of working. The changes will redefine the responsibility of individuals, families and communities for maintaining their own health and wellbeing and require a change in culture that provides a greater focus on promoting resilience, independence, self care and community support.

Changing the way we work, even when this is for positive reasons, can be challenging. We recognise that the level of change required will involve

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difficult decisions about the way some services are delivered and that these will not always be popular. We will have to pay attention to managing this change effectively and ensure that we are effective in listening and involving staff, elected members and communities in the modernising programme.

Working with others

We take great pride in our positive track record for delivering improvement and for our commitment to partnership working based upon respect for others.

The modernising Social Services programme and commitment within the Council priorities to support vulnerable people is making us look more closely to home and to work much more in partnership with our own Council services such as housing, leisure and community services, education and countryside services.

In 2012/13 we have established the North Wales Commissioning Hub that is starting to see some real improvements in the commissioning of services for people with complex needs (adults and children). Building on the North Wales Adoption Service we have established a joint adoption panel with Conwy Social Services.

As the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCU) has continued to embed there have been times when the pace of partnership working and service development has not been as quick as we would have liked. This continues to be challenging for all but what does remain is a commitment from all parties to work in collaboration to achieve positive outcomes for our citizens. The recent commitment to develop the Single Point of Access across health and social care, and the fact that BCU are partners in the Regional Commissioning Hub provide good evidence for this.

In November 2012, parts of St Asaph, Ruthin, Rhuddlan and a number of other communities, were devastated by floods. Both during the emergency response, and in the ongoing recovery process, Social Services staff worked in excellent partnership with partners across the Council, the Environment Agency, and 3rd sector colleagues. Much has been learnt about the processes for safeguarding vulnerable residents and maintaining independence during events like this.

The progress in detail

The following sections provide a more detailed analysis of:

- how people can access support
- our performance for services to adults and services to children and families
- the difference we are making, and
- our top priority areas for service development and improvement in 2013/14

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Providing an effective and timely first response

Our First Contact Team provides a single point of access to our services. They carry out initial screening to find out what needs the individual might have and refer them to the appropriate team or relevant external agencies.

Often we are able to signpost people to information/advice and everyday support in their own communities. Accessing community support is an integral part of leading an independent and fulfilling life. Based on sample data our First Contact Team are able to signpost a quarter of people who contact Social Services to community based services.

Single point of Access

Last year we were selected as a pilot to develop a single point of access to social and health care services. This service will provide a single number that the public can use to make contact and get support from a range of agencies when in need of help.

With funding from the Social Services Improvement Agency we have worked with Health and third sector colleagues to develop the model for our Single Point of Access which will go live this Autumn. Developing this service has taken longer than we initially anticipated but we are now in the final stages leading up to the implementation. Excitingly, the work will also now be used to inform the development of a Single Point of Access across North Wales.

Supporting Children and Families

What we are about

We aim to ensure vulnerable children:

- are safeguarded
- live with secure, stable loving families
- have opportunities for success, and
- are enabled to grow and develop into healthy, well rounded adults.

The Services we provide

We recognise the importance of providing the right support to children and families at the right time. This involves working closely with other agencies to combine our effort so that we:

- help prevent problems arising
- respond early before problems escalate, and
- provide effective support when intensive help is needed from statutory services.

The services we provide include:

- information, advice and signposting people to help and support
- supporting families to care for their children safely and to reduce the risk of family breakdown
- helping children in need, children with disabilities and young carers
- supporting looked after children and care leavers
- providing stable, secure placements through fostering and adoption, and
- child protection to ensure vulnerable children are safe.

Supporting Families in a timely and effective way

Every year families, professionals and the general public contact us with concerns about children and young people and in 2012/2013 we received 7345 of these contacts. The needs of these children and young people will be very different with some needing low level short term support and others needing to come into the care of the local authority.

We have worked hard to develop our early intervention services so that we are able to support families who need help but do not require social services input. Through the Team Around the Family and Families First services we can respond to family's needs as early as possible and help to stop problems and issues growing. The Team Around the Family works closely with families to identify what issues they want to address, to build on strengths that exist in the family and to put in place support that helps the family to manage their

own situation going forward. In addition to the Team Around the Family we have a meeting every two weeks with the agencies delivering early intervention services that helps us to make sure we respond to families at the right time and with the right services. In 2012/13 Team Around the Family worked with 89 families which included 191 children/ young people.

“Would just like to thank a member of the Team Around the Family for helping me get some order in my family. Just to be a happy unit is amazing and fantastic”

For some of the families who come to our attention whose needs are more serious we work closely with teachers, health visitors, and the police to share information and concerns about children and families. Through our meetings with them we agree what action is needed to support the family and who will take the lead. This approach helps to ensure that families who need help get early support from the most appropriate agency and that we (social services) are able to target who we work with.

“The service provided felt ‘impartial’ which allowed me to be more open and honest. I did not get the impression that my family had been judged or pigeon holed prior to our first meeting, which made me feel positive about speaking to my Support Worker”

We have worked hard this year to build a strong relationship between the Team Around the Family and early intervention services and the statutory Children and Family Services to make sure that for those families whose needs can fluctuate their experience through the different services is smooth.

These ways of working are helping us to ensure that we target the right services to families. One of the measures we use to help build a picture of how well services are targeted is to look at our re-referral rates. All authorities have children and families re-referred for help. However, in 2010/11 our re-referral rate of 29% was much higher than other authorities in Wales. We are pleased that the measures we have taken to support families early on have helped to reduce our re-referral rate to just over 19%. This performance compares well to other authorities in Wales.

Helping children in need, children with disabilities and young carers

"Thank you so much Sue for sharing our journey, for all your time, care & support. You have made a huge difference to our lives - to me, to us as a family.... You became part of our lives 11 1/2 years ago... We met when our world had been up ended then blown apart, over the years you have helped me gather some of the pieces up, held them for me, helped me slowly put them back together - they don't fit exactly back but with your help we've managed to piece together some semblance of recognisable normality..." (Parent of Clic Sargent Service User)

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In 2011/12 we undertook a big piece of work to identify those vulnerable families whose needs are most likely to escalate. Through this activity we identified the needs and common themes in the lives of 723 families. In 2012/13 we have used the information from this study to develop our early intervention services for children and their families.

The restructure of the whole service has concentrated on the quality of our practice and services we provide and we are very pleased with how well the new structure has been established and we are now really starting to see the improvements in the ways in which we work with children and the outcomes we are able to achieve for them.

During this year we have undertaken a detailed review of our intensive family support services to see how well they respond to the needs of our families, both in terms of the availability of the services as the families need them and also the issues the services address. Following on from this review we have been able to reconfigure our services so that in 2013/14 we are able to extend our family support service to be a seven day a week provision, develop a new support foster care service that will help us to support families in crisis with a view to enabling children to remain with their families.

Services for children with disabilities focus on maximising their development and wellbeing and supporting them to live within their community. In 2012/13 we worked with our colleagues in education to identify and understand in more detail the needs of 365 of our children with disabilities and their families. A number of aspects in the lives and experiences of the children and families were explored and the results will be used to shape a range of much improved and informed 'whole family' services from 2013/14 onwards. For example we will be looking at how we promote and enable the independence of young people with disabilities through increased and improved access to social, leisure and youth opportunities.

As reported in our report in 2011/12 we had intended to set up a regional North Wales Young Carer service ready for 2013/14. Agreement has now been reached by 3 of the 6 local authorities in North Wales to set up a joint service from 2014 onwards. In the meantime we have been working very closely with colleagues in education to ensure we have a more joined up approach to how we identify and respond to the needs of young carers and this work will continue in 2013/14.

Looked after children and care leavers

Looked after children are children and young people who are in the care of the local authority because of a care order made by the court or by agreement with their parent(s). Often these children are referred to as being 'in care'.

Overall we have seen a slight reduction in the number of looked after children with 158 looked after children on the 31st March 2013 compared to 162 on the 31st March 2012. However, this figure does not reflect that we have had a

significant number of children entering the care system, and a significant number of children leaving care during the year.

Last year 79 children became looked after compared to 50 children in 2011/12. For each child coming into care there are a range of activities that we must undertake which include allocating each child a social worker, developing a care plan, ensuring they have an appropriate placement and that they are visited and reviewed in timely manner.

“Like I was put in care when I was 11 and I felt like no-one wanted me, but coming into a nice home makes it easier. Giving a child/young person opportunities they may never had. The security of knowing there will always be food, clothes and a bed and most importantly always love”

The headline figure of our looked after population remaining stable also masks the volume of work we have undertaken to ensure that looked after children are able to leave care with appropriate arrangements in place.

The Council acts as a ‘corporate parent’ for looked after children to make sure their education, health and well-being is promoted, that they take full advantage of opportunities and reach their full potential. This commitment continues with these children as they develop into young adults and prepare for their move to independence and out of the care of the local authority and in 2012/13 we supported 77 care leavers. During this year we have also carried out a detailed piece of work with our care leavers and the workers who directly support them to review how well the services we provide to care leavers. The results of this work helped to shape the design of the new 3 year care leavers personal advisor service that will commence in 2013/14. Some of the changes we will make will include more focussed support on the development of independence skills with more targeted work with foster carers and a review of the processes by which we make payments to care leavers.

Fostering and adoption

In order to ensure we are able to provide permanent, stable, secure and loving families for our looked after children/ young people we work hard to make sure we have well trained, well supported and committed foster carers who are able to meet the range of needs of our looked after children. In 2012/13, and continuing into 2013/14, we have invested heavily in the training and development of our foster carers, particularly our longstanding foster carers and kinship carers (carers who are relatives of the young people they look after), to make sure they have the skills and experiences required to provide caring and stable homes for our children and young people. In addition, we have invested resources into developing a new emergency foster care service.

“We have very much enjoyed fostering and feel we have grown in confidence and experience. We now feel more able to accommodate more challenging placements and are always eager to learn new skills and take on board any evidence and comments regarding our development as carers” (Foster Carer)

It is important that we continue to recruit foster carers in order to provide a range of placements to meet the differing needs of our looked after children. We have therefore worked closely with our corporate communications and marketing service to develop a new brand and marketing strategy for foster care recruitment that will be launched in Spring 2013/14.

The North Wales Adoption Service has continued to embed however the national shortage of prospective adopters continues to be an issue affecting the region and as such has restricted progress in recruiting a sufficient range of adopters that can be matched with our children who are suitable for adoption. Adding to this pressure has been the implementation of new legislation that requires care proceedings to be completed within 26 weeks.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

One of Social Services' key responsibilities is to protect children from harm and take action to protect any child who is found to have suffered abuse, or whose welfare is likely to suffer without further intervention or services. We try to do this in partnership with families, and where appropriate, keep children in their own homes.

In our assessment last year we cited our confidence in having efficient and well developed systems in place to keep vulnerable children and young people safe. In 2012/13 we have maintained our robust processes for dealing with child protection with 99% of initial child protection conferences held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion and 99% of child protection reviews carried out within timescales.

We have focussed our efforts on improving our engagement and consultation with children who have been subject to the child protection process in order to better understand the impact (positive/ negative) it has had on their safety. In 2012/13 we undertook a comprehensive consultation activity with this group of children and as a result of the findings we will be taking forward a number of activities that will include exploring options as to how we can increase the participation of children in child protection conferences.

In November 2012, further allegations of historical child abuse led to the establishment in North Wales of Operation Pallial and the Macur review. We have satisfied ourselves that we do comply with the recommendations of previous Inquiries and, with other North Wales authorities, are ensuring appropriate support and counselling services are available for victims coming forward as a result of the recent investigations.

How does our performance compare?

Based on national performance indicators our assessment of performance is summarised as:

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ making a decision on referrals within one working day ○ the percentage of referrals which are repeat referrals ○ ensuring that the child is seen as part of the initial assessment ○ undertaking initial child protection conferences within 15 working days of the strategy discussion ○ open cases are allocated to qualified social workers ○ completing core assessments within 35 working days ○ placing looked after children in appropriate placements so that they do not experience unnecessary placement moves ○ supporting children and young people to ensure attendance in school whilst being looked after ○ maintaining contact with young people aged 19 who were in care on their 16th birthday ○ child in need reviews are carried out within the statutory timescales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ completing looked after reviews within statutory timescales ○ undertaking initial core group meetings being held within 10 working days of the initial child protection conference ○ undertaking statutory visits to looked after children in accordance with regulations ○ ensuring plans for permanence for looked after children are in place at the point of their second review

Delivering an efficient, high quality and well managed service

We have invested heavily in the development of the children's services workforce over the past year with a clear focus on providing our staff with a range of skills and improving quality. We now have an established and stable workforce that continues to gain in experience and as a result we have good staff retention rates with no agency staff.

“The Support Worker was professional and approachable... listened and did not dismiss my comments. The whole process felt positive – I got the impression that no matter what the outcome of the assessment something could be done to help us”

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Sickness continues to be a serious issue for us and despite our efforts and commitments we have not succeeded in reducing the high absence rates. The average sickness rate in 2012/13 was 14.27 days per employee compared to a target of 8.61 days per employee. This is an area that will require even more focussed efforts in 2013/14 including the introduction of a fortnightly absence review meeting.

Throughout the past year we have improved our quality assurance and performance management processes with a more robust focus on practice and quality. In particular we have:

- developed and improved our case file auditing to be more outcome focussed i.e. to see whether our interventions made a child's life better
- improved processes for consultation and engagement with service users;
- integrated performance and quality data together to provide a better picture of how well we are doing;

Looking forward—our top priorities for 2013-14

The changing face of Social Services for the future requires us to think differently about how we deliver services. There is a need to modernise our services to enable us to find the long term efficiency savings needed whilst continuing to provide good services for children and families needing Social Services intervention.

The main focus of our energies for 2013/14 will be as follows:

1. Vulnerable families provide stability and safe care for children

To achieve this we will:

- implement a 24/7 Family Support Service;
- implement a new Foster Care Support Service;
- implement the North Wales pre-court protocol;
- strengthen our working with Housing Services to develop accommodation for vulnerable families;
- work with Adult and Business Support Services to develop a family focus in key areas – as opposed to services focussing on 'children' or 'adults'

2. Looked after children are provided with permanent, stable, secure and loving families and become independent adults

To achieve this we will:

- develop a detailed profile of our fostering service to include demand, areas of need, service delivery and gaps in services;
- develop our services and support to children placed with parents;
- commission a new regional advocacy service;

- strengthen our working relationship with Housing Services to develop accommodation for care leavers

3. Vulnerable children are protected

To achieve this we will:

- implement the IFSS (Integrated Family Support Service) model;
- explore new models for child protection conferences;
- implement a 'lessons learnt' process so that we can reflect and learn from practice to help improve our systems and quality of work

4. Children with complex additional needs are enabled to live stable, secure and inclusive family lives

To achieve this we will:

- work in partnership with other agencies to develop services for children with disabilities;
- review and restructure our Occupational Therapy service;
- undertake a review of the Disability Facilities Grant process;
- introduce a person centred approach to our work

5. The Children and Family service is efficient, of high quality and well managed

To achieve this we will:

- reduce the service sickness absence levels;
- increase the percentage of staff who have an annual performance appraisal
- enhance our use of information and intelligence to shape our services;
- agree with our partner agencies how we fund and deliver complex packages of care;
- deliver our Customer Service Standards;
- develop mobile and flexible working within the service
- improve our ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh
- improve our effectiveness in dealing with complaints

Adult and Business Services

What we are about

We want to ensure that vulnerable people are protected and able to live as independently as possible. For most people this means working with them so that they can continue to live in their own home.

The services we provide

The type of service we offer depends on a person's needs. Depending on their situation we could offer someone:

- information and advice
- advice about benefits and how to claim them
- signposting to services available in their community
- support that helps people to regain or develop their skills and confidence to take care of themselves
- special equipment and home adaptations
- care and/or support in a person's home
- short breaks
- day services
- care in a residential or nursing home for people with specific high level care needs

Prevention and early intervention

Research shows that having positive connections with other people is an important part of people's wellbeing. We have a range of services that have been developed to build networks and support to help people live in their community without reliance on statutory social care services. In 2012/13 we have extended the range of community initiatives that support this agenda, to include:

- memory cafes for people with dementia
- open forums where older people can listen and be involved in meetings hosted by different speakers covering a wide range of topics
- a series of seminars for older people focussing on values, peace, positivity, compassion, cooperation, self care, resilience and hope

We continue to work closely with Library and Leisure Services who provide a range of services that help support vulnerable people through:

- activities for older people such as chair based exercises
- arts based provision for vulnerable people e.g. 'lost in arts' for people with dementia and their carers and 'hidden talents' music classes for people with learning disabilities

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- library services e.g. reading groups to meet and share experiences and a mobile library service that provide books, advice and support to 226 people who are housebound

Promoting independence

We have developed our services to provide a strong focus on supporting people to maintain or regain their independence.

We have an effective Intake Service which aims to respond promptly when people seek help. The service has a clear focus on how we can support people to regain and maintain their independence. Last year our Intake and Reablement Service assisted 1786 people to retain their independence by delivering advice and short term intensive support. Positively 72% of people no longer needed a package of care after short term support.

Examples of how the service supported people to lead an independent life include:

Reablement

Reablement is short-term support which is designed to develop people's confidence to manage as many tasks as possible on their own rather than having other people do things for them.

In 2012/13 our reablement team provided a support programme to 337 people. This included supporting:

- 49 people in ways that prevented hospital admission
- 219 people to return to their own home from hospital
- 5 people in ways that prevented a residential placement
- 8 people to return to their own home from residential care

The outcomes for people receiving this service were very positive. On completing their reablement support programme:

- 216 people required no further services
- 119 people transferred to our long term locality Teams as they needed ongoing domiciliary care – of which:

58 people required a decrease level of support
56 people required the same level of support
5 people had an increased level of support

Surveys completed by people who have received reablement showed that at the end of the reablement service:

- 93% who responded were treated with dignity & respect
- 94% who responded felt more able to remain living independently in own home

During the year the reablement team provided a quick response when support was needed, but there were times when it proved a real challenge to respond to the level of demand. There are significant pressures on the availability of hospital beds across Wales. Locally there is particular pressure to ensure that social care arrangements are in place to enable people to be discharged from hospital into the community. This means working swiftly and in partnership with Health to assess people and to put in place care arrangements that have a focus on helping people to regain their independence. Within this context the pressures on reablement are likely to remain.

In addition there have been a small number of cases where the independent sector have not been available to provide domiciliary care when the reablement support was due to finish. This meant the reablement team had to hold the cases longer than they needed to. Given the pressures on reablement a further £100k investment for developing reablement has been prioritised for 2013/14.

Telecare

Telecare is a range of equipment that uses sensors and an alarm system which is plugged into the telephone socket. This alerts a carer or a response centre when a person needs help or something has been detected such as gas or smoke.

In 2012/13 we provided an additional 486 people with Telecare. There are now over 1300 with Telecare in Denbighshire.

In 2012 we asked everyone who has Telecare what they thought about their service. We had 530 responses which showed:

- 97% of people said Telecare helped them to remain independent
- 98% of people said that they feel safer and more secure at home with Telecare

People told us:

“It has saved my life”
“A wonderful service, always there when needed.”
“I believe everyone should have Telecare, it has certainly given me peace of mind.”
“Very good advice available, improves my confidence to cope.”

243 carers and family members responded to our Telecare survey and:

- 99% said Telecare equipment has been useful.
- 98% felt that the Telecare service has helped the person they care for live independently at home.

Carers and family told us:

“It puts my mind at rest knowing that there is help there if needed, especially if I am not there.”
“When I leave I know that if anything went wrong she has back up.”

In October 2012 the Telecare Team won an Excellence Denbighshire award in recognition of the service they provide. This award reflects the hard work of staff and focus on providing an excellent customer focused service.

Equipment

We have a Community Equipment Service (CESI), which is a formal partnership with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCU). The service provides and manages a wide range of equipment to help people live safely at home. In 2012/13 we provided 1,756 people with of equipment.

The service user “has asked that I contact you to thank you again for the brilliant work you did with her when installing and showing her how to use the electric bath seat. She said this has been life changing for her.”

In 2013/14 we will develop a scheme to provide Direct Payments for equipment and minor adaptations. We anticipate that the scheme will reduce the waiting times for people who require small items of equipment and minor adaptations to their homes.

Supporting People with complex and/or long term care needs

Whilst our emphasis is on prevention and early intervention, we recognise that an ageing population has complex, long term care needs that require responsive support tailored to individual needs. Where specialist/long term services are needed we are committed to ensuring that we provide high quality, responsive services, that focus on meeting people's needs in their own community wherever possible. At all stages our aim is to ensure that people are able to have a strong voice and control over their support arrangements. Progress in these areas can be summarised as follows:

- Providing high quality services

In 2012/13 we have:

- ✓ improved the timeliness of reviews so that we meet service users to discuss and review their needs, the services they receive and the quality of their support. We reviewed 1610 cases last year and 94% of these were within timescales
- ✓ developed standards to ensure that people are involved in their assessment, arrangements for their care and in reviewing services. We will

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be rolling these standards out and monitoring how well we meet them in 2013/14

- ✓ started to develop information for the public about the quality of our services - we recognise that we need to refine and develop this approach further
- ✓ developed a questionnaire to establish service user and carer views and experience on the quality of services. We consulted with on the questionnaire at the end of 2012/13 and will be rolling it out in 2013

Our aim is to further develop our approach to quality in 2013/14. We will strengthen and improve contract monitoring processes through regional work on quality monitoring; by bringing together our reviewing and contracting staff to join up and enhance our oversight of the quality of care provision; we will also explore the potential of carrying out spot checks for domiciliary care. In addition we will be implementing rota visits which provide Elected Members an opportunity to visit our In House provider services and speak to service users and staff about the quality of services.

- Ensuring people have a strong voice and control

In our learning disability service we have developed and embedded a 'person centred' approach to our work. This approach means we listen and work with the person, their family and friends, to find out what is important to them and how we can best support them to improve the quality of their lives and reach their full potential.

People who were involved in a person centred review told us:

"I really felt I was being listened to." (Service user)

"Thank you for such a productive and enjoyable review at our home. We both felt that it was your approach and personality that produced such positive results, so thank you very much." (Parents)

"I thought a lot came out of the review and there was no doubt it showed us what was really important to him." (Independent Advocate)

Our aim is build on this work and develop an approach known as 'citizen directed support'. This approach is about people having choice and control over the support they need to live their life as independently as possible. The approach challenges the national focus on care management which can be bureaucratic with lots of forms to fill in and standardised ways of meeting people's needs.

Developing citizen directed support will require significant change for social services staff, providers and service users and families – but the change is worth making. We recognise that it may take a number of years to fully embed this approach. We will start the process in 2013/14 by completing a

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citizen directed support self assessment which has been developed by the Social Services Improvement Agency. The self assessment will help inform our plan to implement and manage this change over the coming years.

Dignity in Care

We continue to champion dignity in care which is an integral part of ensuring high quality service provision. In October 2012 we held a Celebrating Age Festival. The festival involved speed dating for older people and a court trial with society in the dock to answer charges of ageism. The trial involved a judge, barristers and a jury and challenged ageism and negative stereotypes of ageing. We were pleased that three of our Dignity in Care volunteers were shortlisted for the WRVS Diamond Champion Award for their role in shaping and delivering Denbighshire's dignity in care training programme and other voluntary work they undertake. Our work on championing dignity for older people has also been shortlisted for a social care accolade.

Protecting Vulnerable Adults

We have effective systems in place to make sure that vulnerable people are safeguarded. We work well with other agencies and last year 271 people from across the social care workforce attended POVA (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) training. We have posters that explain the types of abuse a vulnerable person may suffer and who can be contacted by anyone who has concerns.

In 2012/13 there were 97 vulnerable people referred to us where we undertook an investigation into their circumstances. We effectively worked with these people and agencies to ensure that the risk was fully managed. In all the risk was managed for 97% of referrals investigated. Where the risk wasn't managed plans and measures were put in place.

Carers

We value the role that carers have and appreciate this can be a challenging and demanding role. We aim to improve the quality of life of carers and support them to achieve their potential so that they and the people they care for, can live fulfilled lives.

Over recent years there have been significant improvements in the range of support available to carers. We now commission carer support services with six local 3rd sector organisations including a Carers Needs Assessment Service run by NEWCIS.

Over the last 12 months we have played an active role in the North Wales Carers Strategic Group which has led the strategic approach to implementing the new Carers Measure (Wales) across North Wales. This has involved close work with BCU and the 3rd Sector to develop a North Wales Carers Information and Consultation Strategy 2012/15 which was approved by Welsh

Status: Draft for consultation
Date: 3 May 2013

Government in January 2013. We will continue to work closely with BCU to implement the strategy action plan.

We remain committed to improving and developing support and services for carers and we will be investing additional resources for carer services over the next 3 years. In 2013/14 we will develop a three-year plan setting out how we will develop carer support, including availability of suitable respite care.

New Work Connections

The New Work Connections (NWC) project supports people over the age of 16 who, through a range of disadvantages, are economically inactive or unemployed. The main group of people we work with are people who have social care needs and we believe that help with pursuing training and/or employment can often help to transform people's lives and reduce dependency on health and social care services. The project is led by Denbighshire and covers the four local authority areas of Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire and Gwynedd. This is a major collaboration project funded with an European grant and match funding from local authorities.

The Denbighshire project has engaged with 1619 participants as of March 2013 and we are aiming to help more people in 2013/14.

How does our performance compare?

In terms of our business performance, we continue to demonstrate that we are delivering a good service in areas that matter to people receiving services:

Strengths	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• delayed transfers of care from hospital remain very low• the numbers of people provided with reablement and not requiring an ongoing service continues to rise• the numbers of new admissions to care homes continues to fall• the number of reviews completed on time is the best it has ever been• the number of people with CDS/Direct Payments continues to rise – but we recognise that more needs to be done	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• we need to continue to invest in services to support carers and ensure that they receive a timely service• we need to look at how we can manage increasing demand for Occupational Therapy assessment• we are providing a responsive reablement service but this is becoming more challenging as we aim to support more people and people with complex needs

The ability to manage within the resources available to us is very important and we delivered a balanced budget this year, having delivered efficiencies of some £875k. This has only been possible through working together as a service and it stands us in good stead for some of the financial challenges facing us in the next few years

The Challenges (and Opportunities) Ahead

Unfortunately, there continue to be challenges facing the Council as a whole, and Adult Social Care in particular. There are clear pressures arising from an ageing society and the increases in demands for services that that brings. This is at the same time that resources available to Local Government are reducing. While a Comprehensive Spending Review from Westminster is not due until the end of this calendar year, it would not be unrealistic to assume that the funds available to the Council could be reduced by some £10m over the 3 years to 2017.

This will mean that some hard choices will have to be made but will mean that Adult Social Care has to embrace the philosophy embedded in *Sustainable Social Services* and the *Social Services & Wellbeing Bill* of reducing the reliance of people on ongoing care and support. We are fortunate this coming year in that, while we do need to find £475k efficiencies, the Council has prioritised these services in the Corporate Plan and linked funds to the Plan. In addition, Welsh Government has protected social services in their budget, meaning this year we can re-invest efficiency money into pump-priming initiatives to grow alternatives to long term support. Initiatives that will be funded through Corporate Plan allocation and Welsh Government protection include:

- additional Extra Care Housing to further reduce reliance on more expensive residential care
- improvements at Cysgod y Gaer to reduce energy costs
- development of alternative models of support for adults with learning disabilities to offset the changes and a reduction in Supporting People funds
- direct payments for equipment and minor adaptations
- mobile working solutions to enable a reduction in expensive office space
- working with leisure services to develop services that promote the wellbeing of vulnerable people living in communities
- additional support for carers
- additional reablement capacity
- investment in equipment at Cenfdy Healthcare.

Delivering an efficient, high quality and well managed service

There are other challenges that we will be facing in ensuring that we can demonstrate that the Service that is efficient and effective. For example, our sickness absence rates continue to be a concern and there will be a greater emphasis on managing and supporting staff who are absent through sickness in this coming year.

Looking forward—our top priorities for 2013-14

Theme	Priority Actions
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Safeguarding Making sure that vulnerable adults are protected from harm	Introduce new arrangements for protecting vulnerable people, including consideration of regional/sub-regional Safeguarding Boards
	Work with Health to ensure that where we have joint responsibility for safeguarding vulnerable people in hospital, there will be robust safeguarding arrangements in place
Personalisation: People having choice and control over their lives and being able to live as independently as possible	Implement ways of working that enable people to be as independent as possible while maintaining choice and control over their social care needs.
	Improve contract monitoring processes e.g. exploring spot checks for domiciliary care.
	Develop a workforce that can deliver the requirements of a modern social care service
	Embed Dignity in Care as a fundamental part of the way we work
	Deliver our Customer Service Standards and develop our services in response to feedback from people who use Services
	Develop a scheme to provide Direct Payments for equipment and minor adaptations
	Apply the lessons learnt from New Work Connections to shape future day services for working age adults
Localisation People's individual needs being met within their local communities	We will work with Leisure Services to develop a strategy for independent living which will set out in detail how we will support people to live active and independent lives
	We will create additional capacity within the 3 rd sector and other DCC Services to support the well-being agenda
	Create additional Reablement capacity across Denbighshire to reduce dependency on on-going social care services
	Develop a three-year plan to support the development of services that support carers
	Develop plans for 3 additional Extra Care facilities in Denbighshire
	implement Denbighshire's volunteer scheme to provide opportunities for residents to become active members of their community
Integration Making sure that services work together to meet the needs of individuals using flexible resources to reduce dependence	Implement new arrangements for accessing advice and information through a Single Point of Access
	We will continue to strengthen our working with Health by: a. clarifying and developing the role of health and social care support workers

	<p>b. developing guidance on social care and health responsibilities for delivering personal care</p>
	<p>We will improve partnership working with Children and Family Services to:</p> <p>a. develop a family focus in relevant service areas</p> <p>b. explore models for providing effective services for young people with disabilities who will need ongoing support from Adult Services</p>
	<p>We will continue to strengthen our working with Housing by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a shared strategic approach to meeting the accommodation needs of vulnerable groups • clarifying and developing the role of wardens in supporting people to live independently • promoting the take up of telecare in local authority accommodation
<p>Efficiency and Effectiveness Making sure that adults have co-ordinated health and social care support to meet their needs</p>	<p>Review and re-engineer 3 key processes to ensure they deliver efficiencies as well as improve outcomes for individuals</p> <p>Develop mobile and flexible working within the service and reduce the office space we need</p> <p>We will streamline our financial processes to deliver efficiencies in</p> <p>Reduce sickness absence</p> <p>increase the % of staff who have an annual performance appraisal</p> <p>We will design an annual whole sector training plan that is based on identified training needs and priorities</p> <p>Improve our ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh</p> <p>Improve our effectiveness in dealing with complaints</p>